

**Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, December 23, 1791, Tables and Notes, with Copy, from the Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

**TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES J. MSS.**

Philadelphia December 23, 1791.

Sir, —As the conditions of our commerce with the French and British Dominions, are important, and a moment seems to be approaching, when it may be useful that both should be accurately understood, I have thrown a representation of them into the form of a Table, shewing at one view, how the principal articles, interesting to our Agriculture and Navigation, stand in the European and American dominions of these two Powers. As to so much of it as respects France, I have cited under every article the law on which it depends: which laws, from 1784, downwards, are in my possession.

Port charges are so different; according to the size of the vessel, and the dexterity of the captain, that an examination of a greater number of Portbills might, perhaps, produce a different result. I can only say that, that expressed in the Table, is fairly drawn from such Bills as I could readily get access to, and that I have no reason to suppose it varies much from the truth, nor on which side the variation would lie. Still, I cannot make myself responsible for this article. The authorities cited will vouch the rest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See pages 361 and 362 for a correction to these tables.

*Footing of the Commerce of the United States with France & England, & with the French and English Amr. Colonies*

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FRANCE GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND Wheat-Flour, &c. (a) Free Prohibited till it is 6./3. the bushel. Rice. (a) Free. 7./4. sterl. the kental. Salted fish. (b) 8 l. Kental. Prohibited. Salted beef. (c) 5 l. the K. Prohibited. Salted pork. (d) 5 l. k. in some ports. prohibited in others. 4/4. 9. K. Furs. (a) Free. 15 to 20 p. c. Indigo. (c) 5 l. k. Free. Whale oil. (a) 7 l. 10 s. the barr. of 520 lbs. £18 3s. ton. Tar, pitch, Turpentine. 2 ½ p. c. 5 sous the kental, by new Tariff. 11d. 11./2./3. B. Ships. (a) free for naturalization. Prohibited naturalizatn. (b) Port charges. cents. average. Bordeaux, 23 the ton 18 Havre, 14 the ton average. London, 76 Liverpool, 61 1.09 dols. Bristol, 1.43 Hull, 1.57 (f) Exports to. 1,384,246 D. (k) 6,888,970 D. (f) Imports from. 155,136 D. 13,965,464 D. (f) Freight in their vessels. 9,842 tons. 119,194 tons. (f) Freight in our vessels 19,173 tons. 39,171 tons. FRENCH AMERICA ENGLISH AMERICA Wheat, Flour, &c. (g) Prohibited by a general law. Free, by suspensions from time to time. Free, by proclamn. Rice. (c) 1 pr cent. Free, by proclamn. Salted fish. (h) 1 pr c. X 3 l. k. Prohibited. Salted beef. (e) 1 pr c. X 3. l k. Prohibited. Port charges. Cape Franc. .96 Fort au Prince, .40 .55 Martinique, .18 Jamaica, .76 average. Antigua, .22 Barbadoes, .42 .44 St. Kitts, .43 Dominique, .21 Exports to. 3,284,656 D. 2,357,583 D. Imports from. 1,913,212 D. 1,319,964 D. Freighter in their vessels. 3,959 tons 107,759 tons. Freight in our vessels 97,236 tons. Prohibited.

*The following Articles, being on an equal footing in both Countries, are thrown together*

FRANCE GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND Tobacco. Free of duty, but under monopoly. 1./3. the lb. Wood. (a) Free. Free. Pot & Pearl Ash. (a) Free. Free. Flax seed. (a) Free. Free. FRENCH AMERICA ENGLISH AMERICA Corn Indian. (c) 1 p.c. Free, By proclamn. Wood. (c) 1 p. c. Free, by proclamn. Salted pork. (c) Prohibited. Prohibited. Horses & mules. (c) Free. Free, by proclamn. Live provisions. (c) 1 p. c. Free, by proclamn. Tar, pitch, Turpentine. (c) 1 p. c. Free, by proclamn. Imports allowed. Rum, molasses generally, sugar, and all other commodities till Augt 1, 1794. Rum, molasses, sugar, coffee, cocoa nuts, pimento, ginger, by proclamation.

(a) By *Arret* of Dec. 29, 1787.

(a) By *Arret* of 1763.

(c) By *Arret* of Aug. 30, 1784.

(c) By *Arret* of 1688.

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(c) By *Arret* of 1760.

(c) Taken from the Custom house returns of the United States.

(c) There is a general law of France prohibiting foreign Flour in their Islands, with a suspending power to their Governors, in cases of necessity. An *Arret* of May 9, 1789, by their Governor makes it free till 1794, August; and in fact it is generally free there.

(c) The *Arret* of Sept. 18, 1785, gave a premium of 10# the Kental on fish brought in their own bottoms, for 5 years, so that the law expired Sept. 18, 1790. Another *Arret*, past a week after, laid a Duty of 5 1. the kental, on fish brought in foreign vessels, to raise money for the premium before mentioned. The last *Arret* was not limited in time; yet seems to be understood as only commensurate with the other. Accordingly an *Arret* of May 9, 1789, has made fish in foreign bottoms liable to 3 1. the kental only till Aug. 1, 1794.

(c) The Port charges are estimated from Bills collected from the merchants of Philadelphia. They are different in different ports of the same country, and different in the same ports on vessels of different sizes. Where I had several hills of the same port, I averaged them together. The dollar is rated at 4.1 4½. sterling in England, at 6. 18. in the British West Indies, and 5# 12s. in France, and at 8# 5s. in the French West Indies.

Several articles stated to be *free* in France, do in fact pay one-eighth of a per cent, which was retained merely to oblige an entry to be made in their Custom house books. In like manner several of the articles stated to be *free* in England, do in fact pay a light duty. The English duties are taken from the Book of rates.

(c)

Dollars.

The Exports to Great Britain & Ireland, are 6,888,978 50

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How much they consume I know not. They certainly re-export the following—  
Dollars.

Grain, the whole since the law of the last parliament 1,093,885

Tobacco, #, according to Sheffield's Tables 2,295,411

Rice, 5/7, according to same 552,750

Indigo, #, according to same 315,887

Furs, probably  $\frac{1}{2}$  17,950

Ginseng, the whole 32,424

Mahogany not being of our productions should also be deducted 16,724

Wine 4,425

4,329,456 00

Remainder, including their consumption and the unknown re-exportations 2,559,522 00

The re-exportations certainly known then are 6/8 of the whole.